

EX. 7 BUILD A COMMUNITY-CENTRIC BRAND VOICE

WHY THIS IS HELPFUL

This is where your Brand becomes truly magnetic; **Community**-Centric.

A **brand voice** cannot be a monolith anymore, but this is always what formal organizations do. It's a mistake. Corporations are **not** people. They are socially constructed groups of people. They should sound like their own community.



Community Brands allow open dissent in the ranks but encourage unification when times are hard. They're complex but speak simply. A **new member** should be treated more personally as they grow closer. A sense of intimacy should follow community, and the brand voice should change with proximity.

HOW YOU'LL USE THE BRAND VOICE GUIDE

This exercise expands on traditional notions of **brand identity** by giving you more than 1 voice. We will create a plan for interacting with your audience as they become a community by first making a single brand voice, and then modifying the USPs you constructed before to create a multi-dimensional voice that is capable of talking to the user in increasingly personal contexts.

Remember: In all copy content is king, but context is queen.

THE THEORY BEHIND THE EXERCISE

When businesses came online, they brought baggage. They only knew how to advertise on TV, Radio, or Print and assumed this virtual medium would be similar. So the marketing strategies that worked before were the first to be tried online. Alas, the strategies translated (poorly), and the internet was treated no different because they 'worked' (sort of). Because these strategies didn't concern interpersonal relationships, businesses' brands didn't either. The industry ignored that online communities are living units of **culture**.



The critical cultural framework they left out is the **socio-ecological model**; larger units of culture, like governments are formed by smaller units of interpersonal groups. Those larger units then apply inward pressure to inform how smaller cultural units change.

This is how communities develop, but since the marketing industry missed this memo, our social networks are broken and your brand has to do it yourself.



NEXT STEPS

1. **Give your brand several faces!**

You should consider that a member of your executive team or a dedicated community manager will need to represent the organization as a whole. You will need a brand spokesperson. Their mannerisms and tone should reflect the brand to some extent, but should not do so entirely. A careful balance must be met, or you could cause PR problems. Consider how Wyrwood uses their behind-the-scenes documentary channel [WyrwoodLife on Youtube](#).

2. **Send this to all of your copy editors and creatives!**

The Brand Voice is the single most critical tool for onboarding new people to speak on behalf of your brand. Especially for people writing professionally for you, nailing the voice and style of your brand is a requirement. This exercise will go a long way toward making sure they onboard quickly.

DEFINITIONS

- **Brand Identity:** The visible elements of a brand, such as color, design, and logo, that identify and distinguish the brand in consumers' minds.
- **Brand Voice:** The unique sound, word choice, mannerisms, and approach your brand uses to present itself as users get closer to the brand.
- **Community:** The set of shared attitudes, values, goals, experiences, practices, and artifacts that characterize a defined group of people of any specific size.
- **Community Brand:** A brand whose followers currently encapsulate and reflect all necessary cultural elements to compose a community.
- **Culture:** The integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that encourages learning and transmitting knowledge among social groups.
- **Socio-Ecological Model:** A sociological model that holds society is stratified into identifiable layers. For change to take effect, it must affect all layers.
- **User Vs. Member:** Members are a subset of users in which those members strongly identify with and describe themselves as a part of the community.

RESOURCES

1. [\[Course\] What are Brand Archetypes | Astute.co](#)
2. [\[Video\] What makes a superhero? | Stan Lee](#)
3. [\[Blog\] Audiences vs. Community: 7 Differences | Tribe.Co](#)
4. [\[Video\] Is Wyrwood Life too inappropriate? S2 E16 \(NSFW\) | WyrwoodLife](#)

INSTRUCTIONS

For this exercise, work through all of the steps concurrently. If you're unsure about one section, fill out others and come back to it. Work back and forth.

IN 3 WORDS, WE ARE...

Do this at the end of the first page. These are the 3 keywords you would use to define your brand. For example, [Panera Bread](#) is warm, organic, and cozy.

TOTAL BRAND IDENTITY

You did this for a person on your user profiles ([ex 4](#)). Build your brand identity the same way—from surface-level representation to deeper layers.

- **Persona:** How does the brand present itself? Loud and strong? Classy? Big?
- **Language:** Do you use jargon, big words, contractions, or an oxford comma?
- **Personality:** How does the brand change for different audience contexts?
- **Emotions:** Does your brand wear its heart on its sleeve, or stay composed?
- **Tone:** Does your overall language sound stiff, young, crass, old, or educated?

OUR STORY, OUR PHILOSOPHY, AND WHO WE ARE NOT

Tell how the brand got started, a philosophy the brand lives by, and who the brand is not in less than a single tweet (240 characters). Exemplify the brand's target voice on social media. Then dissect it in the next section.

BRAND VOICE GUIDELINES: WHAT WE DO AND DO NOT USE IN OUR LANGUAGE

Distinguish the identity into clear rules, grammar, and words that capture what you do and don't do. Do you use abbreviations? Elipses (...) or em dashes (—)? Specific terms like "stoked" or "Excelsior," or "ban," "kowabunga," or "umm..?"

OUR BRAND SOUNDS LIKE...

Just as with any User Profile, it may help to compare yourself to a popular public figure. If you were to encapsulate your brand into a person, who are they most like? Does your brand sound more like Ryan Reynolds or Betty White? Does your brand act more like a presidential candidate or a comedian?

SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL STRATIFICATION

In the first part of the exercise, you built a cohesive brand identity and brand voice. Now it's time to diversify that voice to bend the rules when users get closer. Your brand must change depending on the level of engagement with a user. Don't talk to your community like you do the public. Select a Unique Selling Proposition from the previous exercise, and rephrase it based on how close that user may be to your brand. When they get behind your 'walls,' do you use contractions or get less professional?

BUILD A COMMUNITY-CENTRIC BRAND VOICE



In 3 words we are:

Persona

Language

Personality

Emotions

Tone

Our Story

Our Philosophy

Who we are NOT

Brand Voice Guidelines

Words we use

Words we Don't

Our brand sounds like:

General Public: Press Releases, Website Copy, Profile Descriptions

Wider Community: Advertising, Books, Landing Page Copy

Inner Community: Email Marketing, Conferences, Messaging

Interpersonal: Customer Service, Private Messages & Email

Inner Circle: Employee, Personal Events, Dinners

BRAND VOICE

Guidelines

Voice Guidelines

8th-grade language
Shorter sentences
Single line statements
Comma's used less
ALL CAPS when needed
Interjections used rarely
Qualifications used rarely
EM dashes — over colons.
Ethical curses are fine
Truncations, abbreviations,
& acronyms are preferred.
Hype-language preferred.
Active current verbs
"I" and "me" over "we"
Specific Target Names

Our Story

When republicans found success in their bigotry we tried to stay in our lane and play by their rules, and it failed. Now we are in danger, and we're fighting back. We're fighting for our lives and we will show our opponents that we're flesh and blood people.

Word we use

Fucking, Damn, high horse,
Trans, transgender
The Dems, The right
Patriarchy



Our Philophy

Our job is to make it very clear that these horrible bills will not go unchallenged. Our job is to stand menacingly behind the democrats' backs and make the right feel like fighting them means facing us. Our job is to make passing transphobic bills less worth it for their agendas.

We are not...

We will not compromise. If you've made life so bad that we're involved, you've already fucked up too much for us to come to the table. We will not bend on our beliefs and we are okay dying on that hill if it makes it clear we are people deserving of respect.

Words we don't

More than 7 characters
Ivory-tower terms
Passive language "-ing's"
Generally undesignated terms
like "They," "them, over there"

Changes

To The Public

Stand with us! Republicans are looking to imprison the "cool parents" and break up families for supporting their childrens' rights to healthcare and their own bodies! House Bill 801 in the texas senate will tear trans children from their consenting parents and placed in un-supportive foster homes simply because a few republican legislators are scared the kids

On Social

We won't stand for this Fucked up bill! Join us at the Texas state capital for a Die-In to show these politicians that their decision isn't just a hypothetical vote! This vote could kill trans children, tear very real loving parents from their kids, and stress a social care system that is already on the brink! Show these senators that trans kids blood is on their hands!

The Trans Community

This is urgent and we need your help... On May 31st, in what is perhaps the worst joke imaginable, republicans in the texas state are going to pass a bill that makes being a support parent to a trans person, fucking illegal. These ass hats are taking away kids right to hormones and blockers, while telling our parents how to take care of kids they've not even spoken to. This is fucked, and we need you to join us on May 28th at the texas state capital for a Die-In to show these politiciaons that trans kids' blood is

At Events

Thank you all for coming to support trans rights today. As you know we are under attack in one of the worst anti-LGBTQ+ acts of legislation and we're not going to take it! We're going to fight for our rights! We're going to fight for trans kids lives! We're going to tear those politicians down from their thrown and make them toke to us! And this bill? We're going to TEAR IT UP!

With Each Ether

So we're not going to stand for this right? We're definitely setting up a Die-in in Austin, Dallas, Jacksonville, and Missoula. We need organizers, we need artists, and we need performers willing to get in front of the mic! We're doing a Die-in and we're getting blood on that Senator's hands whether he likes it or not! We need trans families willing to speak, and we need health officials to stand against it all. If you are in one of those areas and are willing to help, please, join us in the community discord!~